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THE

RURAL DISTRICT OF ELY

ANNUAL REPORT

for the year

1957

by

K. S. MAURICE-SMITH,

M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,

Medical Officer of Health.

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RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF ELY

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1957

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the yea ending 31st December 1957.

1. STATISTICS:

During 1957 the usual statistics have been kept and are available. These are not included in my Report.

2. GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES:

(a) Ambulances.- Two ambulances are stationed at Ely, both being operated by the Isle of Ely County Council.

The Littleport St. John Ambulance continues to work under the agency agreement with the County Council. This vehicle, which serves the local area, and those areas adjoining when necessary, continues to be of the greatest value.

As in previous years, the Ely and Littleport St. John Divisions provide attendants for all three vehicles. This work is done voluntarily by members in their spare time. Yet another year of devoted and willing service has been given by the members of St. John to the public.

(b) Nursing and Clinic Arrangements.- These are the same as for previous years. The District Nurses continue to give cheerfully their invaluable services to those needing their help.

2. GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES (Contd.)

(c) Hospitals.-

(i) Tower Hospital for Chronic Sick
(ii) The Isolation Hospital
(iii) The Grange Maternity Home

These Hospitals are under the control of the Regional Hospital Board.

3. WATER:

(a) (i) The supply for the district is drawn from two chalk wells at West Row. During 1957 water supplies of adequate quantity and quality have been maintained.

(ii) There have been no major breakdowns during the year.

(b) (i) The Chloramine Plant has been in use continually and has proved satisfactory. The chloramine process permits of the treatment of the water at the source.

(ii) The usual chemical and bacteriological examinations were made during the year and proved satisfactory. In addition, all new mains are sampled and no connections are made until the reports on these samples are found satisfactory.

(iii) During the year it was decided to proceed with improvements to the Little Thetford, Witchford and Wentworth supplies.

(iv) There is an abundant supply of pure water available, and at no time has it been necessary to restrict supplies, notwithstanding the insufficient storage capacity.

Once again, I must stress the fact that the need for additional water storage in the district is becoming more urgent. As more water is used each year, more water will have to be stored in the area to supply that need.

(v) The water has no plumbo-solvent action.

3. WATER (Contd.)

(b) (vi) Referring to the general supply of water to houses in the area, it is estimated that between 98-99% of houses are covered.

I am certain that a very high standard of coverage for a rural area is maintained in the Council's district.

There have been no other extensions during the year.

During the year there have been consultations between the local water undertakings concerning re-grouping in accordance with Ministry Circular 52/56.

4. SEWAGE:

(a) Yet once again I must refer to the very unsatisfactory conditions still existing in the area. Last year I referred to the effect of these conditions in aggravating "the drift from the land." I see no reason for altering my opinion this year, nor do I feel any less alarmed when I consider the state of affairs than I did last year.

(b) It is most pleasing to record that the plans for the remaining part of the Sutton Sewers will shortly go to tender. For many years this village has been a source of much worry.

Unfortunately the position of Stretham remains unchanged, and I consider that conditions here amount to a "major black spot." I hope it will be possible during the coming months to see some signs of progress in this village.

It is gratifying to note that during the course of the year the Ministry has been prepared to lift restrictions so far as older types of Council houses are concerned, so that the provision of bathrooms and modern sanitary conveniences can be considered as one definite step forward.

5. HOUSING:

Permanent Housing:

No. of dwellings completed during 1957	NIL
No. of dwellings provided under the Housing Acts to 31st December 1957	1486
No. of dwellings under construction at 31st December 1957	18

Temporary Housing:

No. of converted ex-service huts occupied at 31st December 1957	40

Private Enterprise:

New Permanent Houses:

No. of dwellings completed during 1957	32
No. of dwellings completed since April 1945	256
No. of dwellings under construction at 31st December 1957	15

Subsidised Provision and Improvement of Dwellings

Housing (Financial Provisions) Act 1938: Section 3 - New Dwellings for Agricultural Workers - £10 or £15 per annum for 40 years from Completion.

No. of dwellings completed during 1957	4*
No. of dwellings completed since April 1945	33*
No. of dwellings completed since 1938	58

*These figures are included in numbers under head "New Permanent Houses" above.

5. HOUSING (Contd.)

Subsidised Provision and Improvement of Dwellings (Contd.)

Housing Act 1949: Section 20 - Dwellings Improved or Provided by Conversion of Buildings with Aid of Improvement Grant

		Schemes	Dwellings
No. of Schemes approved for grant	In 1957	28	32
and			
No. of dwellings to be provided or improved	Since 1949	139	169
Amount of Grant involved by approved Schemes	In 1957	£8,395:14: 5	
	Since 1949	£41,698: 0: 5.	

		Schemes	Dwellings
No. of schemes completed	In 1957	32	45
and			
No. of dwellings provided or improved	Since 1949	124	152
Amount of Grant paid	In 1957	£11,286: 6: 3.	
	Since 1949	£36,927: 6: 5.	

6. SCHOOLS:

I have no comments to make this year.

7. MILK:

The majority of milk sold in this area is either pasteurised or T.T. or both. A very small amount is produced by persons keeping one or two cows and this is often given to their employees. There does not appear to be much control which can be exercised over this practice.

5. MILK (Contd.)

During the years since the war there has been considerable improvement in the way in which milk is sold. The Milk & Dairies Regulations (1949) have been of great help in producing these much needed improvements, and at the same time there are signs that many retailers are conscious of their responsibilities in this respect. This sense of responsibility must also extend to the employees concerned. It has been said that "the price of freedom is eternal vigilance." The same can be applied to clean milk.

I feel it necessary to stress once again that these Regulations can and must be definitely enforced, and if and when offenders are found the necessary steps will be unhesitatingly taken.

Again I wish to draw the Council's attention to the filthy habit observed among some members of the public in using milk bottles for fluids other than milk. I cannot condemn this practice too strongly, as well as that of leaving collections of milk bottles at pavement level within easy range of, inter alia, the passing canine population.

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

(a) 116 notifications of infectious diseases were received.

The total of 116 cases is made up as follows :

Scarlet Fever	4
Whooping Cough	2
Sonne Dysentery	12
Measles	77
Pneumonia	15
Infective Hepatitis	1
Erysipelas	1
Meningitis(?)	1
Virus Encephalitis	2
Food Poisoning	1
	116

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES (Contd.)

(b) Disinfection of premises etc. is regularly carried out in cases of notifiable disease; also when infection is reported or requests are received for any special reasons.

(c) Yet again I have the greatest pleasure in recording that no cases of diphtheria have occurred in the district this year. As in previous years, I must stress that this record can only be maintained if every child is immunized against this disease.

Again, in these days of greatly increased travel, especially air travel, vaccination against small pox is equally imperative.

(d) Tuberculosis:

3 new cases were notified during the year. After making the necessary adjustments there are now the following numbers on the Register :-

Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
Males	38	Males	4
Females	24	Females	10

Compared with 1956, the figures shew no change in the total number.

9. FOOD:

The following is a list of food handling premises in the area :-

(i)

Butchers	15
Bakers	7
Fish Shops	5
Grocery and General Food Stores	53
Cafes	2

(ii) 39 premises are registered for the storage and sale of ice cream.

Dairies registered under the Milk & Dairies Regulations 1949 - 1954 = 3.

There is no ice cream manufactured for sale in the area.

9. FOOD (Contd.)

Food Hygiene:

Much time has been spent in this sphere. Although many useful alterations have been made it is still very disheartening to see the attitude of many food handlers. Even though they know the regulations they are not prepared to make any alterations to their premises or conduct until threatened with legal action.

When food is condemned it is disposed of by incineration at the Council's refuse dump or at the local Gas Board Works.

The Public Health Inspector has done most valuable work, and I cannot praise too highly his thoroughness, tact and persevering efforts, at times in the face of much discouragement and opposition. The District owes much to him. When necessary I accompany him. I am pleased to note that there is an increasing tendency for advice to be sought from us.

We would much rather help in avoiding infringements of the Regulations than in chasing offenders.

10. MISCELLANEOUS:

(a) Rodent Control.- During the year the Public Health Inspector and the Rodent Officer have done 916 inspections, which include 774 dwelling houses and business premises and 142 agricultural premises; 686 treatments, including re-treatments, have been carried out.

(b) Moveable Dwellings.- Existing legislation continues to render abortive any real constructional efforts in dealing with this problem. Sometime in the future trouble will develop, I am sure, unless more practical legislation is enacted.

(c) Factories Act.- There is no great problem here as only one factory of any size exists in the district The position generally is reviewed, however, from time to time.

10. MISCELLANEOUS (Contd.)

(d) Slaughterhouses.- The position remains the same as in my report for 1955, and I have no further comments to offer this year.

11. PERSONAL:

To my colleagues in the Office - Mr. Wickens, Mr. Parr, Mr. Clifford Jones and his Staff, Mr. Arnold Cross, Mr. Burtt and his Staff - I give my warmest thanks for all their advice and help during the year which, yet once again, has increased so much my pleasure in my Public Health work.

I have the honour to be,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

K. S. MAURICE-SMITH,

Medical Officer of Health,
Ely Rural District Council.